Have You Heard About the Local Wellness Policy Requirement?

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are to establish a local school wellness policy by June 30, 2006. At a minimum the policy shall include:

- 1) Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate;
- 2) Nutrition guidelines selected by the local education agency for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting students health and reducing childhood obesity;
- 3) An assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulation and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to the National School Lunch Act, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools;
- 4) A plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policies;
- 5) Parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school boards, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policies.



Don't let time get away!

The policy is to be in place by June 30, 2006. How can you get started?

Prepare: Familiarize yourself with the current policies and practices in your district. Talk with the director of food service and physical education in your district regarding current practices and realistic opportunities for change. Find out if your school or district has a school health coordinator or advisory council. If so, talk with members, as they will likely be involved in writing the wellness policy.

Partner: Connect with people in the school district such as PTA members, principals, teachers, and board of education members. Get them excited about the potential to make healthy changes in your district. Partner with interested organizations such as Action for Healthy Kids, the Society for Nutrition Education, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Diabetes Association. Local dietitians, school nurses, pediatricians, and other youth health promoters would also be valuable partners in the process.

Take action: Get your team together to start evaluating where your policies are currently and where you want them to be. A self-assessment tool is available through either *Changing the Scene*: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/changing.html or the *School Health Index* website: www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI. These tools would provide a starting point for discussions on current practices.



What next?

After you have done the assessment, you will be able to identify priorities that need to have policy established. After you have revised or identified policy changes, make sure to market the new policies to students, school personnel, families, and within the community. Implement the policies and then evaluate the results. Required components of a Local Wellness Policy and sample policies from schools are posted on the USDA Team Nutrition Website at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html

Don't let this regulation burden you, by utilizing other community partners listed in the sections above everyone can assist in the collection of information, resources, and identifying policies that make the most sense for your local district.

